



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Reduce Your Risk of Diabetes and Its Complications *Family Support and Quitting Tobacco Use are Critical to Staying Healthy*

BISMARCK, N.D. – Diabetes affects nearly 26 million Americans and an estimated 79 million people are at risk for developing the disease. In North Dakota, diabetes affects more than 37,000 people. For people living with diabetes or who are at risk for type 2 diabetes, family support is critical to staying healthy.

In observance of National Diabetes Month 2013 in November, the North Dakota Department of Health and the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) want people to know that *Diabetes is a Family Affair*. NDEP and its partners are working with individuals, families and communities to take action and encourage simple, but important lifestyle changes to improve their health – particularly if they have diabetes or are at risk for the disease.

Diabetes is a challenging disease that affects the entire family in many ways. For people with diabetes and their families, it's important to work together to manage diabetes and prevent serious health problems such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney disease, and nerve damage that can lead to amputation. People with diabetes who have a strong family support system are better able to cope with the day-to-day challenges associated with the disease.

“Whether family means loved ones at home, school, work, place of worship, or in the community, having a support system is an important part of staying healthy,” said Tera Miller, Diabetes Program director for the North Dakota Department of Health. “The NDEP has many resources to help people work together to improve their health to prevent diabetes and its complications.”

Smoking, as well as use of other tobacco products, can increase your risk of type 2 diabetes and its complications. If you have diabetes and you smoke, you are more likely to have serious health problems from diabetes. Smokers with diabetes have higher risks for serious complications, including:

– more –

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- Heart and kidney disease.
- Poor blood flow in the legs and feet that can lead to foot infections, ulcers, and possible amputation (removal of a body part by surgery, such as toes or feet).
- Retinopathy (an eye disease that can cause blindness).
- Peripheral neuropathy (damaged nerves to the arms and legs that causes numbness, pain, weakness, and poor coordination).

If you use tobacco and have diabetes, quitting will lead to health benefits that begin right away. For more information on help with quitting tobacco use, visit NDQuits at www.ndhealth.gov/ndquits or call 1.800.QUIT.NOW.

It's also important to know that having a family history of diabetes, such as a mother, father, brother or sister with type 2 diabetes, puts you at greater risk for developing type 2 diabetes. The good news is that you – and your family – can take small, but important steps to delay or prevent type 2 diabetes.

This November, the North Dakota Department of Health and the NDEP want to remind you that diabetes is a family affair and provide you with resources that you can use with individuals, families, and communities to take action in the fight against diabetes. Visit www.YourDiabetesInfo.org/DiabetesMonth2013 to learn more.

For more information, contact Tera Miller, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2698.

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